Where to Find Fruit

A Sermon
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"From me is thy fruit found."—Hosea 14:8.

THE text has a double significance. It may indicate the fruit upon which we feed, or the fruit which we are enabled to produce. If it shall mean the first, there is mach of comfort in it. The Lord has compared himself, in his condescending mercy, to a green fir tree in the sentence which precedes the text. The fir tree in the East yields a most goodly shade. Neither the burning heat of the sun, nor the drops of pouring rain can.pass through the dense foliage, and therefore it affords a welcome shelter to the traveler. But shade is not enough for a man; he requires food, and the fir tree fails in that respect, for it yields no repast for the hungry. To complete the picture, therefore, when the Lord deigns to compare himself to a green fir tree, he adds, "From me is thy fruit found." Our gracious God is like a fir tree for shade, but like the apple tree among the trees of the wood for fruit. We sit under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit is sweet unto our taste. Living souls must have food to feed upon, or however well housed, they would be comparable to the king of Israel in the besieged city of Samaria. He sat in his palace of ivory, he wore his mantle of purple, and placed the crown of gold upon his head; but what availed his splendor, when neither barn-floor nor winepress could relieve his hunger? In vain all other blessings if the soul received no nourishment from on high; Jesus must not only be our life, but the bread of heaven by which that life is sustained. Glory be to his name! he is all in all to his people: we may gather fruit from him which shall satisfy the cravings of the soul.

According to Master Trapp, some read this passage, "In me is thy fruit ready." Certain it is that at all times, whenever we approach to God, we shall find in him a ready supply for every lack. The best of trees have fruit on them only at appointed seasons. Who is so unreasonable as to look for fruit upon the peach or the plum at this season of the year? No drooping boughs beckon us to partake of their ripening crops, for Winter's cold still nips the buds. But our God hath fruit at all times: the tree of life yieldeth its fruit every month; nay, every day and every hour, for he is "a very present help in time of trouble."

Another translator reads the passage, "In me thy fruit is enough." Whatever may be the accuracy of the translation, the sentiment itself is most correct. In God there is enough for all his people; and well there may be, since in him there is infinity. "I have enough, my brother," said Esau when he met Jacob: "I have all things," said Jacob in reply. None but the believer can say, "I have all things;" and therefore only he can be sure of having enough.

Ishmael had his bottle of water, and went away into the wilderness; but it is written, that Isaac abode by the well: how happy is the soul which bath learned how to live by the well of his faithful God! for the water will be spent in the bottle, but the water will never be spent in the well. Christian, remember the all sufficiency of thy God! Let that ancient name, *"El Shaddai"—God all-sufficient,* sound like music in thine ear—as some translate it, "The many-breasted God," yielding from himself the sustenance of all his creatures.

As we find the text translated, we have it, "From me is thy fruit *found;"* but the particle *from* does not mean *apart from,* but *out of me;* and to prevent misunderstanding, I shall not err if I read it *in,* for this is the force of the word in this place. The text speaks of fruit being found, implying perhaps, that we must look for it—not because there is little, or here and there a cluster, like the grape-gleanings of Abi-ezer; but because the Lord will be enquired of by the house of Israel, and would exercise our faith by making us search for the needed benefit. It is of essential service to us to make us seek, and hence we have the promise of finding to excite our diligence. Christian, look up longingly! Is thy spirit hungering? Look up to thy God now with intense desire; come before him with earnest, vehement pleadings, and thou shalt find in thy God whatsoever thy heart desireth.

Mark that little word *"thy."* As if the Lord had said, "It is *thine* already; I have freely given it; it is *thy* fruit. I bear it, but I bear it for thee; every golden apple, every luscious cluster, I will bestow on thee. Thou canst not ask me for anything which I have not given thee. For behold, 1 have given thee my Son, and 'in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.'" Believer, hast thou not learned the sweet logic of the beloved disciple, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" In the eternal covenant, God has made over—not only all created things—but himself unto his people. "I will be their God, and they shall be my people." "God, even our God," saith the Psalmist. Is not that a delightful expression, *"Even our own* God?" And so, as God is your own, his fruit is your own. Every outgoing of power, every outflow of love is yours already. "In him is thy fruit found." Surely this word *"thy"* is as a little golden cup filled with a rare cordial; he who drinketh of it shall forget his misery, and remember his poverty no more. Let us not fail then, dearly beloved, to receive boldly that which is our own by covenant engagement and faithful promise. What dost thou want this morning? Surely out of the "twelve manner of fruits," there shall be something which will suit thy necessities; stand not back through shame or fear, but come boldly to the throne of the heavenly grace.

Thus much for the first sense of the text; but we do not intend to use the words in that signification this morning. We think that, understanding the text the other way—"From me is that fruit found which grace produces in thee," it will be a very fitting sequel to the sermon of last Sabbath morning. You will recollect we spoke upon the withering of the fig tree which mocked the Savior with its leaves, but yielded him no fruit. There may be some

who were alarmed under that sermon, and even believers who were shaken by it; such anxieties will do none of us any hurt, especially if they lead us to pant after fruitfulness. Our text, following upon the other, will direct earnest seekers where to find fruit. There are three sorts of preachers, all useful in their way, the doctrinal, the experimental, and the practical; we will try to blend the three this morning, and so handle the words *doctrinally, experimentally,* and *practically.*

I. First. THE DOCTRINE OF THE TEXT. The doctrine of the text is twofold. First, *that the believer's fruit is his own*—it is called "thy fruit;" secondly, that though it is the believer's own, yet *it proceeds entirely from his God.*

1. The first doctrine is that *true fruit is a believer's own.* You will think this a very trite remark, but it is one which needs to be made in these days, for there are certain persons who talk of man as if he were not a thinking, intelligent, free agent. They forget his will, judgment, reason, and affections: they leave out of their consideration everything in fact which constitutes the man, and then speak of the operations of grace as though they were manual works upon wood or stone. For aught I can see, according to their way of talking, the grace of God might just as well have produced holiness in monkeys as in men, for men are generally represented as merely passive existences to be moved by them to gratitude, or repentance, or faith, as horses are groomed in a stable or led out to be exercised. Be it never forgotten that our God deals with men as intelligent beings, having will and reason and all the other powers which make man a responsible creature; he does not ignore our manhood when he converts us by his grace. He uses means fitted for our constitution as men, "I drew them with the cords of love, with the bands of a man."

Good works are a believer's own. It were an ill thing for him if they were not; to what could we compare him but to those dead sticks with fruits tied on them, which women sell to little children? a sorry picture for a branch of Christ's vine. The believer produces fruit from his own inner self when grace has renewed him; and if his holiness were not really the outgrowth of his new heart and his renewed nature, it would be no sign of spiritual life. It is not fruit tied on us, but fruit growing out of us which proveth us to be engrafted into Christ.

True fruit is the believer's own because he *wills* through divine grace to do good works. If I performed what looked like a good work against my will, I do not see how it could be truly a good work as far as the doer is concerned. If a man could be compelled to virtue while his heart staggered away to sin, would he not be really transgressing? There is a gracious willingness towards the right thing bestowed upon us by the Holy Spirit. Nay, there is not only a will to holiness, but *a desire after it.* The true Christian longs after holiness and usefulness; he hungers and thirsts to do the will of his Father who is in heaven. Like his Lord in some measure, it is to him his meat and his drink to do the will of him who sent him. He can say, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." He is constrained, but mark, it is not

a physical constraint, for "the love of Christ constraineth us." So you see, beloved, good works are a believer's own because he is willing to do them and desires to perform them.

They are his own, again, because *he actually does them.* The Holy Ghost does not repent, nor feed the hungry, nor clothe the naked, nor preach the gospel. He gives us grace to do all these, but we ourselves do them. If the poor be fed, it must be by these hands; if souls are edified, it must be by these lips; we do not fold our arms, and shut our mouths, and then bring forth fruit unto God. We do not find ourselves taken up by the hair of our head as the prophet Habakkuk was said to have been, according to the Apocrypha, and so carried away whether we will or no, to perform a deed of charity. All glory be to the Holy Spirit, but he is not glorified by making him appear to be a physical force instead of the great spiritual Worker. We do, my brethren, bring forth fruit which is properly our own when we consider ways of usefulness, meditate methods of working, plan designs of good, act out deeds of mercy, persevere in labor, and continue in service before God.

I will tell you why I am absolutely sure a believer's works are his own, namely, because he grieves over them. The best works he ever performs he feels are his own, because they are imperfect. If there is anything good in them, he ascribes it wholly to the fact that they proceeded from God; but, inasmuch as there is something imperfect in them, he is obliged to say, "Ah! yes, this is *my* fruit. If it had been God's fruit independent of me, it would have been perfect, but inasmuch as it is imperfect, I am compelled to see that I had a hand in it. The stream *was* clear enough as it came from the fountain, but flowing through the wooden spout of my nature, it is become in some measure defiled, and so far at least is mine."

Dear friends, the whole analogy of fruitbearing must show to you that the Christian does bring forth fruit unto God, real fruit from his inner self; and if any of you think that you are going to attain to holiness by simply being passive, you are wonderfully mistaken. If you imagine you will be a pilgrim by sitting down at the wicket-gate, or be carried in a sedan-chair to glory, you will find yourselves left behind. No, we must fight if we would win; we must travel if we would reach the Celestial City; we must wrestle, and fight, and pray. The Word of God does say "It is God that worketh in us to will and to do of his own good pleasure," but it does not stop there, it bids us for this very reason "Work out our own salvation with fear and trembling." The passive first, but then the active. We must lie as dead at Jehovah's feet to be quickened, but being quickened, what then? Why then we walk in holiness and in the fear of God. We are first of all made trees of the Lord's right-hand planting, and we receive grace from him, and then through his grace, we ourselves do really bring forth fruit. The truth is clear enough, prove by your energetic strivings that you under stand it.

2. The pith of the doctrine lieth here, that *all a believer's fruit proceeds from his God,* and that in several senses from *the divine purpose.* If you are holy, it is because he has called you to holiness. If you have good works they come to you, according to the word of the

apostle concerning good works, "which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." When you see a costly vase which is the admiration of all eyes, you know that whatever of beauty there is in that vessel was originally in the artist's plan. If you have examined his sketches, you have seen every elegant line, and every graceful figure. Even so, beloved, if you have been sanctified it is according to the eternal design, which was settled in grace and wisdom, before the skies were formed.

All our fruit springs from our God as to *calling.* You were dead in trespasses and sins. There were no good works in you by nature, and there never would have been, but he who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined in your heart, to give you the knowledge of God, and then to turn you from dead works to serve the living and true God. You owe everything to your calling. The tree which is loaded with fruit, owes its fruit first of all, to its having been chosen to be in the garden, and next to its having been really planted there; for in our case, had we been left to grow in the wide wilderness, we should have brought forth no fruit unto God; but he took us up out of the place of barrenness, and put us in the rich soil which Jesus had watered with his own bloody sweat, and therefore we bring forth fruit.

Our fruit is found from God as to *union.* The fruit of the branch is really traceable to the root. Cut the connection and the branch dies, and no fruit is hereafter produced. By virtue of our union with Christ we bring forth fruit. Every branch of grapes has been first in the root, it has passed through the stem, and flowed through the sap vessels, and fashioned itself externally into fruit, but it was first internal in the stem; so also every good work was first in Christ, and then was brought forth in us. O Christian, prize this precious doctrine of union to Christ; hold it firmly, because it is the source of every atom of fruitfulness which thou canst ever hope to know. If thou wert not joined to Jesus Christ, no fruit could ever be in thee.

Our fruit comes from God, and from God alone, as to *providence.* When the dew-drops fall from heaven, each one may whisper to the tree and say, "From me is thy fruit found." When the cloud looks down from on high, and is about to distil its liquid treasure, it may thunder to the earth beneath, "From me is thy fruit found." And the bright sun above all others, as he paints the cheek of the apple, or swells the berries of the cluster, may well say to all the trees of the garden, "From me is your fruit found." The fruit owes much to the root—that is essential to fruitfulness—but it owes very much also to external care. Beloved, how much we owe to God's grace-providence! We are greatly debtors to his common providences, in that he maketh all things work together for good. But his grace-providence, in which he provides us constantly with quickening, teaching, correction, consolation, strength, or whatever else we want—to this we owe our all of usefulness or virtue.

Our fruit is found in God as to the matter of *husbandry.* The knife which the gardener taketh from his pocket, might talk to the tree and say, "Much of thy fruit is found in me.

Thou wouldst not yield such an abundance if it were not for my sharp edge. I make thee bleed a little, as I take away thy superfluous shoots, but thou hadst not such goodly clusters if it were not of me." So is it, Christian, with that pruning which the Lord gives to thee. "My Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit."

Thus the text may be read in very many ways. They will all come to one—that we have nothing, except as we receive it from above. "What hast thou which thou hast not received?" I may say, to conclude this head, that all our fruit is found in God, because he will, having been the author of it, get *all the glory of it.* Of all our spiritual life he shall have the praise, for it is all due to him, and if he giveth us a crown at the last, we will cast it at his feet.

Brethren, you know this doctrine well enough without my enlarging upon it; you know how constantly Scripture teacheth us that we can do nothing without Christ. We can sin; we can ruin our own souls; we can bring forth the apples of Sodom and the grapes of Gomorrah, but anything which is lovely, and honest, and of good repute, must come from him who is glorious in working. You have no question or quibble about this. "You hath he quickened;" you trace your life to him You doth he quicken day by day; you owe the continuance of your life to him. You know as a matter of doctrine that "in him we live and move and have our being," and that "every good gift and every perfect gift is from above." I need not confirm this doctrine: no argument is required. You have never erred from the truth in this respect; you could not be Christians if you did, for I hold this to be fundamental truth, in all godliness, that salvation from first to last is of the Lord. Salvation is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. Let us heartily praise him whose workmanship we are.

II. We come now to THE EXPERIENCE. Experimentally we have proof that all our fruit is in God. Let me remind you of your experience when you were the servants of the flesh. What fruit had ye then in those days? What repentance did your natural mind bring forth? What faith in Christ did your unrenewed soul ever beget or foster? What love to God ever stirred your carnal heart? What affection for the brotherhood possessed your alienated spirit? You must say that at that time you were without God and without hope, and certainly without fruit. "What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?" A painful remembrance of your former estate compels you to feel the truth of the Lord's Word, "In me is thy fruit found."

Again, when the law began to work in your heart, and you were in a state of bondage, having enough of light to see your darkness, and enough of life to mourn your death—what fruit had ye then when ye were under the law? The law told you what you should do; did it enable you to do anything? The ten commandments set before you a perfect rule: but was it not "weak through the flesh?" You had a very clear perception of the justice and righteousness of God: did the perception reconcile you to justice or to holiness? Let me ask you, did the law of God ever make you love him? Did the awakenings of your conscience, which

proceeded from it ever lead you to trust in Jesus Christ? They may have been overruled to this purpose, but the law worketh wrath, and as long as you were under it, it rather produced sin in you than righteousness. Such was Paul's experience, "When the commandment came, sin revived, and I died," "for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." As a child might never care to run into the street, but being told not to do it, he straightway doth it by reason of the perversity of his nature, just so it is with us by nature; the forbidden thing our flesh lusteth after. All the enmity of carnal nature is provoked to yet greater sin by the law. That which should have been a bit, becomes a spur. Cold water quencheth fire, and yet when poured on lime, produceth a vehement heat. So the law acts contrary to its own nature, by reason of the depravity of the human heart. Thus were you, my brethren, led by a very sorrowful experience, to feel that from Christ must come your fruit; for none could be produced by the efforts of the flesh, backed up by the most earnest resolution and most devout prayer, and driven onward by the whip of the law.

A sweeter experience has proved this to you. When did you begin to bear fruit? It was when you came to Christ and cast yourselves on the great atonement, and rested on the finished righteousness. Ab! what fruit you had then! Do you remember those early days? Did not your faith, and love, and zeal, form a garden of nuts, an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits? Then indeed the vine flourished, the tender grape appeared, the pomegranates budded forth, and the beds of spices gave forth their smell. Have you declined since then? Even if you have, I charge you to remember that time of love. Jesus remembers it, for he says, "I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me into the wilderness." He recollects that time of the singing of birds, when the voice of the turtle was heard in your land. Would God this were with you ever! *He* has not forgotten it, do you not forget it, but seek to enjoy it still. Your fruit began, you know it did, when you camne to Jesus Christ.

My brethren, when have you been the most fruitless? This is another part of experience. Has not it been when you have lived farthest from the Lord Jesus Christ, when you have slackened in prayer, when you have departed somewhat from the simplicity of your faith, when your graces engrossed your attention instead of your Lord, when you said, "My mountain standeth firm, I shall never be moved;" and forgot where your strength lieth—has not it been then that your fruit has ceased? Some of us know that we have nothing out of Christ by terrible soul-emptyings and humblings of heart before the Lord. Brethren, it is no pleasant thing to be clean emptied out; but such times have happened to some of us, when we have felt that if one prayer would save us, if the Holy Spirit did not aid us, we were damned; if one good thought would take us to heaven, we could not reach it; the vileness of our heart has been so clear before our eyes, that had not it been that there was a mighty God to trust to we should have given up in despair.

"How seldom do I rise to God,

Or taste the joys above!
Corruption presses down my faith,
And chills my flaming love.
When smiling mercy courts my soul
With all its heavenly charms,
This stubborn, this relentless thing,
Would thrust it from my arms."

In such seasons we do well to cry, "Quicken thou me, O Lord, according to thy word." Then you feel that to will is present with you, but how to perform that which is good, you find not. It is a very easy thing for me to exhort you, but sometimes I do not find it very easy to do myself what I exhort you to do. And there are times with us, dear friends, when, though we know our interest in Christ, we are wretched under a deep sense of the creature's fickleness, sinfulness, and death. Our moan is, " wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" When you have seen the utter emptiness of all creature confidence, then you have been able to say, "From him all my fruit must be found, for no fruit can ever come from me." We shall find from Scripture, I am sure—let our past experience confirm it—that the more we depend upon the grace of God in Christ Jesus, and wait upon the Holy Spirit, pleading that his influences may operate in our hearts, the more we shall bring forth fruit unto God. If I could bear fruit without my God, I would loathe the accursed thing, for it would be the fruit of pride—the fruit of an arrogant setting up of one's self in independence of the Creator No; the Lord deliver us from all faith, all hope, all love which do not spring from himself! May we have none of our own-manufactured graces about us. May we have nothing but that which is minted in heaven, and is therefore made of the pure metal. May we have no grace, pray no prayer, do no works, serve God in nothing except as we depend upon his strength and receive his Spirit. Any experience which comes short of a knowledge that we must get all from God, is a deceiving experience. But if you have been brought to find everything in him, beloved, this is a mark of a child of God. Cultivate a spirit of deep humiliation before the Most High; seek to know more your nothingness, and to prove more the omnipotence of the eternal God. There are two books I have tried to read, but I have not got through the first page yet. The first is the book of my own ignorance, and emptiness, and nothingness—what a great book is that! It will take us all our lives to read it, and I question whether Methuselah ever got to the last page. There is another book I must read, or else the first volume will drive me mad—it is the book of God's all-sufficiency. I have not got through the first word of that, much less the first page, but reading the two together, I would spend all my days. This is heaven's own literature, the wisdom which cometh from above. Less than nothing I can boast, and yet "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Having nothing yet possessing all things." Black as the

tents of Kedar, yet fair as the curtains of Solomon: dark as hell's profoundest night, and yet "Fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners."

III. We now arrive at the PRACTICAL POINT.

1. First then, dear friends, *let us look to Jesus Christ for fruit in the same way in which we first looked to him for shade.* That sounds like something you have heard a great many times before. Very well, but have you really understood it? To give an illustration—you want to overcome an angry temper! You are given to ebullitions of passion—you try to overcome that. How do you go to work? It is very possible there are even believers here who have never tried the right way. How did I get salvation? I came to Jesus just as I was, and I trusted him to save me. Can I kill my angry temper in the same way? It is the only way in which I can ever kill it. I must go to Christ with it, and say to him, "Lord, I trust thee to deliver me from it." This is the only death-blow it will ever receive. Are you covetous? Do you feel the world entangle you? You may struggle against this evil as long as you like, but if it be your besetting sin, you will never be delivered from it in any way but the cross. Take it to Christ. Tell him, "Lord, I have trusted thee, and thy name is Jesus—'Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins'—Lord, this is one of my sins; save me from it!" Do not take Jesus Christ with the blood only, and without the water—that is to have only half-a-Christ. Pray to be forgiven, but ask also to be sanctified. Sing with Toplady—

"Let the water and the blood,
From thy river side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Cleanse me from its guilt and power."

I know what some of you do. You go to Christ for forgiveness, and then you go to the law for power to fight your sins. " foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth?" Tell me, did ye receive faith by the law, or by the operation of grace? "Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" The only weapon to fight sin with is the spear which pierced Christ's side. Nothing can kill the viprous brood of hell but drops of Jesus' precious blood. Take your sins to Christ's cross, sir, for the old man can only be crucified there: we are crucified with him; we are buried with him. If I be dead to the world, I must be dead with him, and if I rise again to newness of life, I must rise in him. Ordinances are nothing without Christ as means of mortification. Baptism is nothing, except as we are buried with him in baptism unto death. The Lord's Supper is nothing, except as we eat his flesh and drink his blood, and have communion with him. And your prayers and your repentances, and your tears—the whole of them put together—are not worth a farthing apart from him. Every flower which grows in your garden will wither, and the sooner it is blasted and withered the better for you; only the rose of Sharon will bloom in heaven. "None but Jesus can do helpless sinners good;" or helpless saints either. You must overcome by the blood of the Lamb.

2. Another practical observation is this—*let us cultivate those graces most which bring us most to Christ, for these will be the most fruitful.* Let me look well to my faith; let me see that I keep it purely stayed on him, having no supplementary confidence, but resting wholly and absolutely upon the finished work of my Lord. Let me see to my love. Let my Lord be to me altogether lovely. Lord, help me to sing, "My beloved is mine, and I am his." Sometimes graciously enable me to sing, "He brought me to the banqueting-house, and his banner over me was love. His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me." Faith and love are the great fruitbearers. A gardener says, "There is such and such a twig, I must not cut that off, because it is to the young wood that I am looking for my summer fruits." So he taketh care of it. There is that, believer, a growing faith and growing love to which you must look as the fruitbearing shoots, because they pre-eminently link your soul to Christ, and most evidently have intercourse with him. Cultivate those things which lead you most to him.

3. A third practical piece of advice. *Be most in those engagements which you have experimentally proved to draw you nearest to Christ,* because it is from him that all your fruits proceed. Any holy exercise which will bring you to him will help you to bear fruit Do you find prayer the channel of Jesus' manifestations? Do you find yourself profited in the public means of grace? Is it the breaking of bread which we love to celebrate every Sabbath day, which is most precious to you? If so, wherever Jesus Christ layeth bare his heart to you, there be you found; and if there be any one means of grace which has been more rich to you than another, use it with the greatest perseverance. Use them all, dear friends, do not neglect any, hut especially use those most which bring you nearest to your Lord.

4. Lastly, let none of us—whether we be the Lord's people or not—let none of us ever insult Christ by thinking that we are to bring fruit to him as a recommendation to his love. "From me is thy fruit found." Now there may be some saint here who has lost his evidences, and he dare not approach the throne of grace as he used to do, because he says "I have sinned—I must produce fresh fruit before I dare come." My dear friend! My dear friend! Bring fruit to Christ! How can you talk in so legal a fashion? All the fruit you ever will have you must first get from him! Come to him as you are and get your fruit out of him. Never suppose that you must bring Christ a present or else you must not come to him. He does not want your money. If he takes it he will give it back to you in your sack's mouth. He will receive your fruit as an offering, but never as a reconciliation. There are those here this morning who are not converted as yet. They are saying, "I dare not seek the Lord, I dare not trust Christ. I know the gospel is, trust Christ and you are saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned; but I must not trust him, I am a drunkard, I have been a swearer, I am a Sabbath-breaker, I will wait until I am better and then I will come to Christ." Why how can you talk thus? "From him is thy fruit found." If there be any fruit you must come to Jesus Christ for it. Am I, if I am poor and ragged, am I to buy a new coat before I may

beg a garment? What a strange proposal that I should do for myself what Christ came to do. How can that be reasonable? If I saw a man standing outside the baths and wash-houses, and he should say, "Well really, I've just come home from my work and am as black as a sweep, but I dare not go into those baths until I have washed my face first." I should say, "How foolish! it is in the bath that your washing is to be found." There is no fitness wanted for Christ but that which is in Christ: nothing wanted in you, everything is in him. To use the old proverb," Why carry coals to Newcastle?" Who would think it a profitable business for our London merchants, in the cold winter time, when the price of coals is very high, to charter all the ships they can, and send them laden with coals to Newcastle? If they did so, you would think them mad. And yet there are many sinners penniless, comfortless, with no good thing of their own, who want to bring good works to Jesus! This is carrying coals to Newcastle with a vengeance. Oh! folly! folly! folly! Go with your ship all black and empty, sail up the harbour, and the pit's mouth will soon yield to you an abundance of precious store. Go to Jesus as you are. Do you want faith to-day—repentance—grace? Go to Christ for it. Go to him, resting on him, dependent on him, believing that he is ready to save you, to begin, to carry on, and finish your salvation. He will be as good as you ever believe him to be, and infinitely better. If thou canst believe him princely enough to put all thy sins away, and to cover thee with his righteousness, he will do it, for never man thought too well of Christ. If thou canst get a big thought of Christ, thou big sinner—if thou canst believe on the eternal Son of the eternal Father, who once poured out his blood in streams on Calvary thou art secure. God help thee. Amen.